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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

ISSUED BY DIRECTION AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

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WILLIAM Q. JUDGE, President.

Each member is invited to send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members should be careful to write distinctly and on one side of the paper only.

In sending questions, or answers to questions, whenever an assertion is made that such and such is a doctrine, or that "it is said in Theosophical literature," and the like, the name of author, article, volume, and page referred to must be given.

All communications should be addressed to **The Editor, Theosophical Forum, 144 Madison Avenue, New York City.**

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REQUEST FOR OPINION.

A VERY large number of replies have been received in response to the request for opinion made in the last number of the FORUM. The great mass of members are in favor of the continuance of the publication of the names of the writers answering questions in the FORUM—ninety per cent desiring this—and therefore this system will for the time being be maintained. The majority of the letters received gave as reasons for their views that the FORUM would lose much of its interest if the names of writers were not added, most of the members adding that they were quite able to discriminate upon the merits of an article without a forced ignorance of its authorship. Others held that as the FORUM was really the only means at present that many members have of communicating with each other the names should be continued, so that all thinkers might thus be brought into contact; the possibility of dogma being small in the face of so many individual opinions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION 47.

Does each atom of matter contain an ego and will matter eventually become spiritualized? It is the object of spirit to purify matter? Are we to become all-wise before we can finally be separated from matter?

J. H. Fussell.—In answer to this question, strictly speaking, we do not know anything about the atom. Science merely postulates atoms but does not know anything directly about them. The furthest back that science can go is to the molecule which is the ultimate phenomenon that it knows. We cannot even say that an atom is phenomenal. Supposing however that the atom does exist as a phenomenal something, then certainly back of it must be the one life, and whether this one life be considered simply as a unit manifesting in phenomenal matter, or as expressing itself as an infinite number of lives each of which again expresses itself phenomenally as an atom or a molecule, it would then I think be correct to say that this one life, or these many lives, will eventually attain to the human stage and express themselves as egos.

The terms "matter" and "spirit" are often misleading, and we are liable to forget that in many instances they are used as being the complementary poles of one and the same unknown Life, or whatever we choose to call it. If this be so then we shall find them coëxisting on all planes of manifestation, but spirit will never become matter nor will matter become spirit. The two will ultimately merge into that which is neither spirit nor matter, but is the unmanifested Life. If, however, we use the terms unmanifested and manifested and say that that which is unmanifested descends into manifestation, passing through all the planes from the highest to the lowest and then returning to the unmanifested, the wrong use of these words, spirit and matter, is to some extent avoided. All that we know of life is that which is connected with manifestation, but the goal to which we must some day attain is to rise above manifestation and link ourselves once again with the source of all things, the unmanifested. In order to do this, that is, as expressed in the words of the question, to become separated from matter, we certainly must become all-wise so far as the present, manifested world is concerned. But when all things have attained to this state then a new period of

manifestation will begin in which we shall be able to attain to still greater heights of consciousness.

In this sense it is our duty to purify matter, or that which we know as the manifested world. But what we really do is to help those lives which are manifesting in lower forms than ourselves, so that they may rise to higher planes, as we are being helped—unconsciously for the most part—by those beings who have attained to still greater heights of development than ourselves. We cannot as yet give this help to any extent consciously, but the truest way to help is, in my opinion, by a performance of our own proper duties and by keeping our lives and thoughts pure. For in this way we can not only receive the influences which are transmitted to us from higher sources but also be a channel through which these influences may be handed down to the lives below us.

QUESTION 48.

If a vow of serious import be registered, and a more or less sustained effort be made to keep it, will the personality of the next incarnation be forced to take the same oath?

W. T. Hanson.—That would depend upon the motive which caused the vow. To force a future personality to renew a pledge made in the incarnation immediately preceding, the motive for taking the pledge in the first instance must be recognized as having its origin in the permanent, immortal nature, in that which endures from incarnation to incarnation. If the pledge be made in response to a personal desire, and more particularly if such be contrary to the true intention of the soul it would not necessarily follow that the next personality would be brought face to face with the old vow. The fact that considerable effort had been expended to conform to the pledge in a previous life does not alter the case. Of course all endeavor however directed will have effect in character which inheres in the individuality, and effort to keep any pledge will increase the control which the ego can exercise over its personalities, but I do not think that a future personality should always have to renew and discharge an obligation undertaken by a former one. It is perhaps quite true that the motive arising in the higher nature, after descending through the intervening world may finally be reflected in the lower nature as a desire for improvement leading to the taking of a given pledge, and that this motive having been imperfectly manifested will induce in the next personality a desire leading to taking of some similar or higher pledge, but not necessarily the

same one as before. The extent to which the new pledge differs from the old will depend upon the degree, either greater or less than before, in which the new personality successfully reflects the higher nature. The more perfect the reflection the better expression will the personal nature of the higher motive, and more elevated will be the consequent pledge.

But when the registering of the vow in the first instance is recognized as being directly from the higher nature without any personal coloring, the conditions are different. In this latter case the individuality has already succeeded to some extent in making the personality conscious of the influence from above. The personal man will have begun to suspect that he is not the all and all of himself, and the basis of his being and self-conscious life are certainly something other than he has theretofore considered it. The connection between the higher and lower ego has become more definite and the latter is beginning to realize that he is governed by the former. In reality it was never otherwise. The personal self may and does consider itself to be the cause and master of its own actions, but this is a false notion and an illusion. Now when this illusion is beginning to be dispelled, the individual is obtaining a firmer hold upon the personal man and the basis of conscious identity is moving from the external to the internal; a manifestation which having been brought about in one incarnation should also occur in those succeeding. Therefore, as a pledge taken in response to influences coming directly from the higher nature can only be in accord with the objects of that higher nature,—the Enduring Man whose purposes do not vary, —each succeeding personality will be brought face to face with and forced to renew the pledge once consciously taken, and having in its fulfilment the attainment of those higher ideals.

It can be taken however as quite possible, even probable, that in the incarnations next in succession, there may be no formal oath, that is, no written pledge for instance, and there might be for a time entire incarnations in which there were none, but it is to be born in mind that the mere written registration of such a vow is nothing in itself except perhaps as evidence of the intensity of the internal aspiration, and that the absence of outward evidence does not necessarily prove non-existence of the unseen fact. The old pledge will be present in a far more strenuous effort to correct fault, to overcome difficulties obstructing the way to something beyond a personal life. This would arouse into action the downward tendencies of the nature so that the lower self would fly into open rebellion against the dictates of the

higher, writhe under and refuse to obey its behests, deny the right and wisdom of its injunctions. Sagacity, cunning, the most ingenious arguments and subtile reasonings would be brought to bear, first one and then another, and then in combination, and if these avail nothing resort would be had to pleading and entreaty. The animal would know that not only was he fighting for his life as a ruler, but that defeat would mean servitude. All his own powers thus called to their highest pitch of action he would be assisted by those of the mind which contact with him has temporarily debased. These allies are not to be readily conquered: he who thinks so mistakes. What wonder is there then that the old spiritual pledge is not formally avowed? But it is still in force. If this were not true the fight would cease, and that does not happen. Sophistry and entreaty are both useless. Tears are in vain. Something is fighting on the other side which is Inflexibility itself, which knows what it needs and will be content with not one jot or tittle less. This is the inner man, the Higher Self, pledges made to whom are not in dead words but in letters of fire, enduring forever.

QUESTION 49.

After 1900 A.D. will the Mahatmas cease to communicate with the leaders of the T.S.? Is it possible for the soul to become so depraved that it will cease to exist with no chance of arising again?

J. H. Fussell.—It does not at all seem reasonable to me to suppose that the Mahatmas will cease to communicate at any time with those who have risen to that point where they can be communicated with. If any member of the T.S. or anyone outside of this Society has reached to that point where he has become conscious of the Mahatmas, and has thereby opened for himself a door of communication between him and them, the only way in which that door could be closed would be through his own actions. The question has probably arisen from the statement that the end of the century sees the close of a cycle, during which it is possible to come into communication with the Mahatmas. That there are cycles during which it is more possible to open up communications with them than at other times, is not at all unreasonable and a single illustration will show that there are times during which special effort must be made if we are to progress at all even in the every day matters of life. Take the illustration of a man in a row-boat on the ocean attempting to get to land. He has to wait until he can come in on top of the wave. If he

makes his efforts at the wrong time they are useless and he is only carried out again by the retreating waves. So it is also with a child swinging. If the child wishes to swing high he must make his effort at a particular time. The particular time during which our efforts may, if rightly directed, bring us into communication with the Masters is the last quarter of every century, and for those who have not made such communication during that time the door will remain shut until the next cycle. But those who have made the effort successfully will continue to reap the result of their effort even after the cycle has closed.

The reply to your second question would depend upon the definition of soul. If by soul you refer to the animal soul, the personal self, this certainly may become so depraved that it will eventually be anihilated. But if by soul you mean the imperishable spark, the centre of the life of man, called the monad, Atma-Buddhi, this of course, can never perish, nor indeed can it become depraved. For it is in itself divine. The animal soul is in no sense a permanent thing. It may rather be looked upon as a bundle of experiences, or as as a vehicle by means of which experiences may be gained. It is the lower "I." If these experiences are good and pure and such that the divine man can assimilate, they are added to his nature and become part of him, and the lower "I" becomes united to the true soul; it is raised up to partake of the nature of the self. But if, on the other hand, the personal life is altogether evil, so that none of its experinces can be assimilated by the inner nature, this personal life is eventually lost and leaves no trace at all upon the true inner soul, *i.e.* the lower "I" which belongs merely to the phenomenal world and is not permanent in itself, perishes.

QUESTION 34—*(continued.)*

Dr. Herbert Coryn, in "Siftings," vol. vii, No. 2, page 9, says: "Every evening we must recall the events and even the thoughts of the preceding day; and we must devote some time also to going back through the years and noting all the events and deeds that have made us what we are. . . . We can note when we failed, when we sinned, and take lessons for the future."

Emily Mundy.—I should like to say a word regarding Question 34 in FORUM No 5, September, 1895.

In the *Voice of the Silence*, page 17, pocket edition, you will find these words: "One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind will drag thee down and thou wilt have to start

to climb anew." "Kill in thyself all *memory* of past experiences. *Look not behind* or thou art lost."

It seems to me these instructions applied to the Lower Self to reach the Higher—I am sure much valuable time is lost thinking over the past. If the same amount of energy were put towards *concentrating* the Mind on the Higher Self I think more progress could be made than by retrospection.

If the object of our present existence is to gain experience, what we meet and gather each day is gain or loss, in so far as we have profited or failed to profit by the experiences through which we have passed. They are gone; why try to call them back? Look at each event, each thought, and each action in our every-day life, as they come to us—and profit by the experience—and then devote more or less time each day to the uplifting of the soul, by meditating on those high planes where dwells our Higher Self. This gives more strength, I think, than going over past actions. Instead of dwelling on what we *have* or have *not* done, act and live in the present, live up to your best each minute, then will the hours, days, weeks, present pictures of well-improved time.

I do not believe in "looking backward" for progress, for if the present is rightly spent there will be no need to recall past actions. Of course this does not interfere with trying to rise above the karmic effect of a careless thought or act. But the orthodox way of going over and over our past experiences and bewailing them seems to me a loss of time which might be spent in progressive thought and firm resolution.

"Therefore perform thou that which thou hast to do, at all *times* regardless of the event, for the man who doeth that which he hath to do without attachment to the result obtaineth the Supreme." (*Bhagavad-Gita*, pocket edition, page 25.)

QUESTION 26—*(continued)*.

If a woman's relatives entirely disapprove of her studying Theosophy, is it right for her to relinquish that study—"counting their pleasure, their convenience of the first importance"?

Agnes Varian.—Every human being must act according to his own highest conception of right; irrespective of his own or any one else's pleasure or convenience. If the mental or moral food that is sufficient for his relatives is not sufficient for him, he has no right to starve himself to gratify their whims. Such a course would lead to the weakening of the character and will-power.

While carefully fulfiling every duty to family and friends one must recognize that he also owes a duty to his own soul which must not be neglected.

R. J. Cole.—I am reminded by this question of certain people that bring reproach upon the Christian sect. In some of them the milk of human kindness seems turned to gall and they are so austerely virtuous that they put themselves out of sympathy with most of the ordinary mortals around them. By temperament or discipline they seem to need no relaxation, and they come to regard joy and gladness as special instruments of evil.

I have known another class. They excel in professions of spiritual exaltation. They give largely of their goods to feed the poor, their names are sure to be heard in public places; but to those who are nearest them they are cross and irritable, exacting and repulsive, without patience for faults or sympathy for shortcomings. They have the keenest perceptions when a bad motive lurks anywhere or a weak point in the character of others exist, but they are equally obtuse in perceiving a wish in others to please them or an earnest effort to do right which is often thwarted by circumstances. Some illiterant and clumsy servant after many heartaches lapses into this conclusion: It is no use to try to do right. Now Theosophy and Christianity as taught by Christ are essentially one. All their precepts are designed to make us one in feeling with those around us.

We can urge a man to cultivate his intellect by appealing to his pride or his selfishness; but the moral nature is only reached through the realm of feeling; and unless we feel with people we cannot reach what is best in them and help it to grow and dominate the personality. Where our lot is cast our duty lies. Those that are nearest are the ones that we help or hinder, and if church-going, public profession or metaphysical studies do not make us sympathetic, do not help us to find the feeblest rays of soul-life in others and make us wish in some degree to bear one another's burdens then our family or our nearest friends have a right to object to our continuing any study which diverts what is their rightful possession.

Marietta McAuliff.—My excuse for again reverting to this much-discussed question is the, as it appears to me, great importance of the subject, which involves a principle to be met and settled by every soul somewhere along its line of evolution—the *right* to be free.

Although we should consider the happiness of others before consulting our own pleasure, ought we not to take into account whether the sacrifice demanded is in reality a benefit or an injury to the one asking it? In such a case as being required to give up all study and attendance in the Theosophical Society would it not be a detriment to the one making such a demand? It is no help to anyone, either now or in the future, to indulge the selfish propensities, because they grow by what they feed upon; thus it brings upon such a person the retribution of his or her karma. The motive underlying such a request or demand can be no other than selfish or due to gross ignorance, and neither is a safe guide for our souls.

While it may be the karma of a man or woman to enter such restricting conditions, it need not be their karma to passively submit to the dictates of another, thereby permitting the condition to master them. Such an attitude carried through life may very well drag one down into a state of depravity. The kingdom of heaven must be taken by violence, and the experience under discussion amounts to the subjugation of matter. Why look upon it as a punishment? Rather let us say it is a situation needed by the ego to strengthen the will.

Theosophy *is* a matter of the heart and life, but the heart must be educated to respond to good. Knowledge precedes right behavior; and if the Theosophical Society is the best channel we know through which the truth can flow to us, is it not well, is it not necessary to keep in the current that will bear us into the light, so enabling us the more certainly to be of assistance to others? How much easier ofttimes to yield, thereby restoring our home to more harmonious conditions, how much easier than to carry the struggle to a victorious issue!

In matters conceived by us to be for the eternal welfare it is *not* right to submit to any living being. Who is he who dares to say to the hungering soul: This shall be thy food; so far shalt thou go in search of truth and no farther?

Each one must be the judge for himself as to what constitutes progress. So long as no duties are neglected (and who shall say what is the duty of another?), so long as the time be not given to the society that belongs to another, then I believe the demand to give it up need not be heeded, let it come from whom it may.

To yield seems to be an attitude more peculiar to women than men. Is it that they are weaker willed or that the character of submission partially regulates the incarnation into the female form which may be an expression of weakness?

Those amongst us who are brought facing this problem stand at the parting of the ways. Upon the way it is solved depends our progress. It is the first step toward greater heights. "He who would be free himself must strike the blow." For this day has the ego toiled and striven that we make the choice between the voice of sentiment, mere materialism on the one hand, and the voice of God on the other. It will never be easier than now. This opportunity lost may not come soon again. Shall we not make the struggle that may bring us victory, the right to be free and independent souls yet working for the good of all, and, with heart fixed upon the Everlasting, walk fearlessly toward the future, strong in the knowledge that "he who overcometh shall all things inherit"?

QUESTION 15—*(continued.)*

What is the result of interference *with karma? How does the diverting of a karmic probability in some other direction affect the final karmic completeness? Is it wrong to interfere with karma, or should it be allowed to work itself out uninfluenced?*

S. A. P. Chase.—It seems to me one can interfere with karma and shift its action from one plane to another. If for instance one has acquired a method of overcoming physical ailments the result seems to be that unpleasant things visit him on the mental plane, and in the outer social surroundings and friendly relations.

We cannot break a law but it will "grind us to powder," so to speak. We had better think constantly, "Thy will be done," and learn in peaceful repose to take what comes on any plane, sure only that what belongs to us will come and always for our good. This fully acted on makes pleasant karma and also works out the old in the best possible way. Hence the substance of the old Bible is, "Have faith," and my new Bible, the *Bhagavad Gita*, seems to teach the same. "Leave all to me," "Think only of me," "Commit to me." In studying the Bible I find why David was great; when he sinned he immediately committed it to God—"Stayed himself on God." There is faith for you! Now as spirit is ever manifesting according to its own will as "the Whole" why should we not rest in what we do and in what everybody else does as according to law, and yet with our freedom (apparently) of choice, knowing that laws are many and just and so not bother ourselves about them at all, but live as well as we can and be free as God, and yet humbly patient and ever committing all to the Whole.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

FOR THE USE OF BRANCHES.

In articles and addresses never use Sanskrit or foreign terms without also giving the English meaning; use English terms preferably.

CASTE.

Its origin. Four principal castes in India. Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras. Buddhists recognize no caste. Does Occultism uphold it? Exists in West as in East without being named. Theosophical Society's endeavor to destroy it. Universal Brotherhood and Caste.

REFERENCES.

Bhagavad-Gita, *Theosophical Glossary*.

SYMBOLISM.

Necessity for the study of this. Nature's productions all symbols of an underlying intelligence. Symbolism of the Hindûs and Egyptians. Serpent symbolical of wisdom; square, of matter; triangle, of spirit; crux ansata, of life. Meaning of interlaced triangles, of svastica, of pentagon, of caduceus. Seal of the T.S.A. Symbolism of cross and circle. Christianity full of uninterpreted symbols. Reasons for the power attaching to certain forms, such as five-pointed star.

REFERENCES.

Secret Doctrine; vols. i and ii, "Archaic Symbolism;" *Guide to Theosophy*, articles "Theosophical Symbolism," and "The Six-pointed and Five-pointed Star;" *Path*, vol. i, page 51, vol. iii, page 8.

EVOLUTION.

Known to the ancients. Modern science has merely revivified it. Cannot be properly understood unless the soul is considered as a factor also. The *Secret Doctrine* teaches three kinds of evolution — body, soul, spirit. Meaning of "the stone becomes a plant, plant an animal, animal a man, man a god." Links between the kingdoms not found by science. Exist on other planets and globes. To understand evolution properly the inner spheres or heavens must be studied. Man's progenitors, astral and spiritual. Evolution of the mind and soul. Relation to karma.

REFERENCES.

Ocean of Theosophy, chap. vi, xv; *Secret Doctrine*, vol. i, chapter on Rounds and Races, vol. ii, chapter on Pitris; *Modern Theosophy*, "Planetary Evolution;" *Glossary*, articles "Evolution" and "Emanation."

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT.

Theosophy in all ages and religions. The present T.S. only one manifestation of the movement. Occultism in connection with it. Historical evidences of its existence in the past. Revivification of the movement once every hundred years or thereabout. Duties of workers and members towards

the movement. Non-attachment to forms and mere organizations as such. Similarities existing between Masonic bodies and the present movement. Many societies, autonomous, with but one philosophy and aim—all parts of one whole. What is the real effort of the movement? How far is it possible to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood?

REFERENCES.

Path, article, August, 1895; *Lucifer*, vol. i, No. 3, editorial article by H.P.B.

THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND WORK.

BROOKLYN is to have another Theosophical Society. Some members of the Brooklyn T.S. have decided to organize a branch in the southern part of the city and do work there. This will make the third branch in that city. The name has not yet been decided upon.

CHICKERING HALL (N.Y.) lectures continue successfully. The audiences are increasing each Sunday. Last Sunday morning was wet, but nevertheless 600 persons turned out in the rain to attend the lecture. It is anticipated that in a few Sundays more the hall will be filled.

AT GRAND ISLAND, Neb., a Theosophical Society is about to be organized as the work of Dr. M. J. Gahan. Dr. Gahan is a well-known worker in the Society and has been an organizer of many centres, and we have no doubt that the new branch to be formed at Grand Island will do good work.

MR. E. T. HARGROVE continues a very successful tour. He has already lectured at Toronto, Buffalo, Toledo, Fort Wayne, Sandusky, and Columbus, and in every case reports are received at the headquarters of his well-doing. The lecture work is the most important in the Society and one by which it can best grow.

A GERMAN CENTRE for the study of Theosophy was started in October at New York City. The meetings are held Friday evenings at the headquarters. Mr. Gengenbach was elected president and Mr. Spengler secretary. Inquirers should apply for further information to Mr. Ferdinand Gengenbach, 330 East Sixth street, New York.

ARYAN THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY has arranged for the following lectures during the month of November on Sunday evenings: November 3d, *The Scientific Basis of Universal Brotherhood*, Miss E. M. Daniell; 10th, *The Illusions of the Senses*, Miss K. Hillard; 17th, *The Zodiac*, H. T. Patterson; 24th, *The Riddles of Life*, J. H. Fussell.

KALAYANA T.S., New Britain, Conn., gave a reception on the evening of November 6th, which was attended by members of both the Meriden and Bristol Branches. At it arrangements were made to spread leaflets, etc., throughout central Connecticut. After the addresses refreshments were served and the remainder of the evening spent in social theosophic chat.

AMRITA T.S. has sent in its charter for endorsement as valid under the Constitution of the Theosophical Society in America. Amrita Society had ratified the action of the Convention, but as the Charter was not sent in the branch was not included in the list in the T. S. A. given in last month's FORUM. This brings the number of Branches on the roll up to 90.

HERMES COUNCIL T. S. decided on the 22d of October to surrender its charter. The work there has not in any sense gone backwards, but the members have decided that to retain the organization in Baltimore would not be the best thing at present. They have now reörganized themselves as a class and are doing work. Sometime they purpose to form another Society. The good work done in the past is not in any sense lost, and the time must come when Baltimore will have a very large and active Society. This reduces the number of branches on the roll to 89.

MILWAUKEE BRANCH T. S. A. seems to have entered a new cycle. Its pleasant headquarters are now open to the public every day in the week. A reading-table is furnished with current Theosophical magazines, and a well-stocked library is at hand; theosophical literature is also on sale. At the public meetings the attendance is more than trebled. A little group for study which promises well has been formed in the north side. A *conversazione* was given at the rooms, which has received much praise. The guests were seated around the room in a semicircle; each F.T.S. seated himself before a small group and talked upon some theosophical subject for ten or fifteen minutes. He then moved on to the next group, and in this way each member met every person in the room and—most important—kept *all* conversation upon Theosophy. The only refreshment was music interspersed at half-hour intervals. These gatherings will be held once a month.

THE LOTUS CIRCLE at the Aryan Branch headquarters opened on October 6th with an attendance of thirty-two. The average attendance for five meetings has been twenty-eight, while the number of children present has been as high as fourteen. There are five classes: one for the study of general subjects, one for the *Bhagavad Gita*, a class for young ladies, a class for children, and one for the "little ones." It is noticeable that all who attend become deeply interested in the subjects studied. Shorts talks, with plain and practical illustrations upon such subjects as karma, duty, etc., begin the exercises each day. The interest manifested by the children in their talks and also in the questions asked at the close of the exercises upon the subjects talked of in the children's classes, shows a real appreciation of the truths taught. Everything of a sectarian nature is avoided, and the most devout church-member and the most pronounced sceptic can sit with us without embarassment. We seek only to awaken and foster a love of truth and the desire for right living.

THE MANASA BRANCH in Toledo is in good condition and ready to enter upon the winter's work with energy. Those of the old branch who did not ratify the action of the Boston Convention have not disbanded, as through a misunderstanding it was stated in the August *Path*, but are holding meetings as a branch of the newly chartered American Section. It is true however that the majority of the enthusiastic workers, those to whom Theosophy is a vital issue, belong to the Manasa Branch of the T.S. in America. The Society opened its new rooms in the city, No. 407 Chamber of Commerce, on October 1st, and holds regular meetings on Tuesday evenings. A syllabus of discussions has been issued and the meetings are well attended. The *Secret Doctrine* class meets every Sunday evening, and a study class is soon to be organized. Mr. E. T. Hargrove has given two public lectures in the Church of Our Father (Unitarian). Both lectures were well attended, the second being crowded. In addition to the public lectures Mr. Hargrove gave two most helpful talks to the branch members.

ACTIVITIES IN NEW ENGLAND.

Boston Sunday syllabus for October: 6th, *Theosophy Applied to Life*, E. T. Hargrove; 13th, *Occultism*, L. F. Wade; 20th, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* M. H. Wade; 27th, *We Reap what We have Sown*, M. J. Barnett.

Mr. Hargrove's visit to the leading branches in New England has been of much benefit and has aroused the members to greater activity. He has struck the keynote of Theosophy in striving to make each individual realize that he, *in and of himself*, may be a great power in the work.

At Chilmesford, a town near Lowell, Miss M. L. Guild of Cambridge lectured on *Theosophy* September 29th at the regular service of the Unitarian Church. The result was the formation of a class for study, which meets weekly with Mr. Scales, a member of the Lowell Branch living in Chelmesford. Mr. Scales says that the class, though small, makes up in enthusiasm what it lacks in numbers.

The Beacon T. S. inaugurated a series of "brotherhood suppers" Sunday, November 3d. These suppers are to be served every week in a room in a large building where most of the labor organizations hold their meetings; therefore it is hoped that many of the thinking working men and women will attend. The suppers are to be followed by discussions on the social questions of the day in the light of Theosophy.

PACIFIC COAST ITEMS.

Porterville T.S. is about to send its charter for endorsement. The Branch has reörganized and will do active work this winter.

At New Whatcom, Wash., is to be organized a Society. This is a continuation of the excellent work done in that State, and which produced a short time ago the branch in Fairhaven.

Miss Anne Bryce is conducting a sewing-class at the San Francisco headquarters on Saturday afternoons to aid little girls in obtaining practical skill in sewing and at the same time to inculcate theosophic ethics.

The Pacific Coast Committee has just issued a pamphlet on *Evolution of Manas*, a compilation from the *Secret Doctrine* and other works, by Mrs. Sarah A. Harris of Berkeley, Calif. It is a valuable work and neatly gotten up.

San Francisco Branches have given the following Sunday lectures at Red Men's hall: October 13th, Dr. Jerome A. Anderson, *Reason, Instincts and Intuitions;* 20th, Dr. Allen Griffiths, *Sleep and Death;* 27th, Mrs. Mercie M. Thirds, *The Philosophy of Life;* November 3d, Amos J. Johnson, *Nature and Function of the Soul.*

Aurora Branch, Oakland, has taken up for study the series of topics outlined in the Forum, beginning with the first. Sunday lectures during the month were: October 13th, T. H. Slater, *The Three Objects of the T.S.;* 20th, Amos J. Johnson, *Nature and Function of the Soul;* 27th, Dr. Allen Griffiths, *Sleep and Death;* November 3d, Dr. Jerome A. Anderson, *Death and After.*

Seattle Branch No. 1 has reincarnated under the new name, Seattle Theosophical Society. We also have redecorated our hall or headquarters, so that we are looking quite fresh and youthful in our new incarnation. Mem-

bers of the branch never before displayed so much enthusiasm in the work of the cause as at present. Through and by the instrumentality of the members of the Seattle Branch lectures have been given this fall in Fairhaven, Everett, Snohomish, Port Townsend, Junction City, Leland, with a course of lectures in Quilcene; also in Renton, Fremont, Kirkland, Chico, and a number in Tacoma and Seattle. Blanks have also been sent from Seattle to organize a branch of the T.S.A. in New Whatcom, through the untiring efforts of Mrs. Ella G. Wilson and her able assistants, all members of the Bellingham Bay Branch. Reports from Victoria, Portland, Olympia and Tacoma show that great activity is continually manifested in the work in these cities. We are expecting Mrs. S. A. Harris of California from Victoria very soon to help the work along.

SOME CORRESPONDENTS ANSWERED.

W.H.F. Vegetarianism is not necessarily a part of Theosophy. Many reasons have been given in support of the principle, but at the same time the work is with the inner man more than with the mere external body. As H.P.B. rightly said, if vegetarianism were all, then cows and horses would be high occultists. It may be true that from the point of an advanced student it is better to take only that food which is nearest to nature, but where persons have been born into families that for centuries have been existing on animal food the change is often too radical for them to stand it. Common-sense must be exercised in connection with with all these matters. "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth this defileth a man."

J. D. No one can define your duty for you. There is no possible way by which another can point this out. Each one has his own nature to deal with, and unless he has deliberately turned against his higher intuitions he will always know what is his sphere of work. Of course there are many conditions of mind which custom and civilization have trained us into and which are liable to be considered as duties, and these have to be distinguished from the pure intuitions. If the best known in every circumstance is done then certainly you will not be to blame, and if afterwards you find that a better course could have been pursued then the mistake must be put down to a lack of wisdom rather than want of fulfilment of duty.

CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

All members are not aware that there is a Circulating Library at the Headquarters of the Society, 144 Madison Avenue, New York City. This library has been collected during many years and many members derive great benefit from it. But inasmuch as some have imagined that it was only intended for persons living in New York or belonging to some particular Branch, it is necessary to here state that it is for all members of the T.S.A.; and even for outsiders on payment of a deposit of $5.00 (to be returned upon their ceasing to use the library), or upon any member making himself responsible for the books loaned to such outsider. The charge for loan of the books is five cents a week, the length of time they can be kept out without renewal being three weeks. For *Isis Unveiled* and the *Secret Doctrine*, however,

the charge is ten cents a week, the length of time these can be kept out being six weeks. The expense of mailage or expressage must be born by the borrower and should be advanced before the books are sent. The library at present consists of over three hundred volumes, and such additions are made from time to time as are desirable. Persons desiring any information or wishing to make application for use of the library should address the Librarian at Headquarters. Any members having books which they desire to donate to the library should send them to the Headquarters; if they cannot be used in the Circulating Library they will be presented to branches or places where good use can be made of them.

STAMP COLLECTION FOR THE T.S.

Since last report in the FORUM this collection has grown in size considerably. I have hereby to acknowledge receipt of valuable stamps from Miss F. Tuttle; the Blue Mountain Branch; Miss L. F. Kirwan; T. D. B. Smith; Miss M. S. Lloyd; O. Johnson; and Franklin Saunders. In addition to these there have been received a United States City Despatch stamp of 1842 from a Brooklyn member, the catalogue value of which is $17.50; and a $1.00 Columbian unused stamp, the catalogue value of which is $6.00. I have also to acknowledge receipt of $12.00 from H. Buntrock for the purchase of the stamp books asked for in the last report; and twenty-six cents from Mr. J. C. Hug toward the same purpose. Miss M. S. Lloyd has in addition presented a collection of old coins to be exchanged for stamps or otherwise invested.

T. P. HYATT.

147 Hancock Street, BROOKLYN, N.Y., U.S.A. *Collector.*

NOTICES.

MEMBERS writing to the various offices at Headquarters on matters of business should be careful to address the proper officer and not private individuals.

BRANCHES are requested to send to the FORUM any questions of interest raised in their meetings so as not to confine the magazine to merely personal speculations.

MAY AND August numbers of the FORUM are now out of print. As many requests have been made for copies of these numbers, any member having a copy or copies on hand which he does not desire to keep will kindly send such to the Editor. They can be used to supply to those who wish to complete their files.

IN THE last month's FORUM a request was made for the Branch Secretaries or officers to send to the President's office at Headquarters the hours and days of the public and private meetings of their Societies so that a register might be made of these at that office. Not all branches have attended to this request and it is here made again. The necessity has frequently arisen for such registration, members from other cities and visitors desiring to know the time of these meetings.